



## U.S. Department of Justice

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### **FORMER FINANCIAL SECRETARY PLEADS GUILTY TO DEFRAUDING ROCKFORD CHURCH OUT OF AT LEAST \$140,000**

ROCKFORD – PATRICK J. FITZGERALD, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, and THOMAS J. KNEIR, Special Agent-In-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, today made the following announcement:

**JANNINE M. McKEE**, 36 (DOB: 1/25/68), 219 East Sixth Street, Pecatonica, Illinois, formerly employed as the financial secretary of a Rockford church, pleaded guilty today in Rockford federal court to the crime of wire fraud arising from her unauthorized use of the church's credit card to make personal purchases totaling at least \$140,000 from August 2000 through July 2003.

In pleading guilty, McKee acknowledged that she was employed as the financial secretary of a Rockford church and was responsible for the church's bookkeeping, including maintaining and reconciling all of the church's computer-based accounting records and bank statements, preparing all financial statements for the church, and paying and recording all legitimate bills and expenses of the church. When paying a bill or expense of the church which exceeded \$250, McKee was required to obtain a second signature on the check from either the church's Pastor or a church officer, in addition to her own signature.

McKee admitted that from August 2000 through July 2003, she used the church's American Express business credit card to make unauthorized personal purchases of clothing, food, vacation lodging, entertainment, gifts, pet supplies, and gas for her personal vehicles. McKee admitted that she concealed these expenditures by making false entries in the church's computer-based accounting records that incorrectly indicated the purchases were made by other church employees or were for legitimate church expenses. McKee further admitted she attempted to conceal the personal expenditures by making unauthorized electronic transfers from the church's bank account to pay the American Express bills, thereby avoiding the requirement that she obtain the signature of the church's Pastor or Officer.

Sentencing for McKee will be conducted on Friday, August 6, 2004 at 9:00 a.m. McKee faces a maximum sentence of up to twenty years of imprisonment, a fine of up to \$250,000 or the greater of twice the gross gain to McKee or twice the gross loss to the victim, in addition to a period of supervised release of at least two and up to three years following imprisonment. Her actual sentence will be determined by the United States District Court, guided by the United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The case was investigated by Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The case is being prosecuted in federal court by Assistant United States Attorney Keith C. Syfert.

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